

**The truth springs from the
earth and justice looks
from the sky**

Psalm 85, 12

Union

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Letter of the President



Being a Past Pupils...

Friends,

Being a Past Pupil is a **gift**, a **commitment**, a **responsibility**. These were the conclusions of the two days of meetings, in Rome, of the Presidents and Delegates of the Italian Federations last February.

It is a **gift** because we have become part of a great family and we have been nourished by the charism of Don Bosco and Mother Mazzarello. A gift of great value that we must guard with zeal but not in a selfish way and we must share it. Here is our mission. The Association, at present, is called to be alive, more than ever; we must transmit the flame of the charisma to future generations.

It is a **commitment** that binds us individually and as a group. We must make ourselves present, here and now, in the existential peripheries to which the Church has been invited to walk, with

the instruments of our time, with the language of our young people, assuming their problems, their questions, their sorrows, their solitudes and, also, their joys and hopes.

It is a **responsibility** to keep the charism alive despite being amid many difficulties especially in the Unions where there is no longer any presence of the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians.

The future is still ours: let us not let it get away!

With these convictions, we unite in wishing Mother General a perfect "Thanksgiving Day for 2019" and, with her, to each Daughter of Mary Help of Christians from all over the world.

An affectionate greeting.

Maria Maghini
Confederal President



DAYS OF SPIRITUALITY OF THE SALESIAN FAMILY

Sanctity... a challenge?

by Olivia Furlan *

For some time I had confirmed to the Congress secretariat my decision to participate in the Spirituality Days of the Salesian Family that would take place in Turin from January 10 to 13, 2019. They then sent me a detailed program of activities. Nothing else! Still, it could be said, everything was a ... I jump into the void. I had before me a proposal elaborated only with "words". A single question filled me with curiosity: "Holiness for me, what will this mean? The saints are ... unreachable people! – But well, I thought to myself, something I will learn – In this way, suitcase in hand, in a splendid day of sunshine I arrived at Valdocco, the mother house of the Salesian charism. The place was familiar to me, and in the courtyard of the house, my gaze stopped at the image of Don Bosco that welcomed me. I looked at him and said, "Here I am!"

I looked for directions to the office of the administration. Everything was very well marked; I went inside and completed the registration forms. They gave me the instructions that contained everything useful to live the XXXVII Spirituality Days to the fullest. Up to here, everything was clear; what I did not know was that the Congress had a global connotation. Oh, what emotion! At 4:30 p.m. We were ready to start. The great hall of the theater welcomed all the participants: 350, from the five continents, belonging to the 31 groups of the Sale-

sian Family and, consequently, languages, colors, different directions, but all united by a unique charisma. The Choir of young novices, who with their warm and deep voices, warmed our hearts and prepared us to welcome the presentation of the Strenna 2019, enlivened the welcome. The Rector Major, Father Angel Fernandez Artime, with his video, recorded between the Termini station in Rome and Valdocco, introduced the theme: "HOLINESS ALSO IS FOR YOU". I would like, at once, to make a synthesis of the ideas that emerged in the conference:

- We should not confuse the path of holiness with a kind of spiritualism that escapes reality. Holiness is not reserved for exceptional people but is a daily way of living the Christian existence embodied in the current context, with the risks, challenges and opportunities that God offers us in the way of life.
- Constant reference was made to the Apostolic Exhortation of Pope Francis "Gaudete et Exultate", which holds that holiness is a call made to all, not just to a few since it corresponds to the original plan of God for each one of us.
- Holiness is an invitation for ordinary people, people with whom we walk in everyday life, people with simple gestures.
- It means to face life with courage, confronting the inevitable difficulties of our existence.
- It means to understand human pain and, finally

... "to know how to love!" "Holiness, therefore, is for you, for me, for all!" During these days, I was able to meet, talk, and reflect with different people, each with its own reality of origin and life. I return to my home with the richness of universality. After having said goodbye to many of my "fellow travelers", I returned to the image of Don Bosco and made a promise with these words: "See you soon, until next year!"

* *Confederal Councilor*



In the Beginning, the Word

Do whatever he tells you

*I have looked for you in the sanctuary
to contemplate your strength and your glory.
Because your love is better than life,
my lips will praise you.*

Psalm 63, 3–4



STYLE OF HOLINESS

Holiness is not only action

by Antonio Martinelli *



Pope Francis dedicates numerals 25 to 31 to the theme of “The activity that sanctifies”, the title of the paragraph that I propose for meditation; this text helps us to understand, in a complete way, the style of holiness typical of Don Bosco and Salesian life.

You become saints to the extent that we identify with Christ. Pope Francis observes, “Your identification with Christ and his wishes implies the commitment to build, with him, the Kingdom of love, justice and peace” (n.25).

Reflect on a situation that many believers consider an obstacle in the way of holiness work, activity, the commitments of daily life and the apostolate. With a real effort, the union between contemplation and action can be achieved.

HOLINESS IS NOT ONLY IN ACTION

Let us take up a text of the Gospel: MARTA AND MARY, Luke 10, 38-42: “In those days, Jesus and his disciples were on their way; He entered a village and a woman named Marta gave him lodging. He had a sister, named Mary, who sat at the Lord’s feet listening to his word. Marta, on the other hand, was busy serving them. Suddenly he turned to Jesus and said, “Lord, do not you care that my sister left me alone in the service? Tell him, please, to help me. “But the Lord answered him: “Martha, Martha, you worry and agitate for many things, but only one is important. Maria has chosen the best part, and it will not be taken away. “The Pope comments on this Gospel passage: Both women offer welcome to the Lord while passing by, albeit in a different way. Maria is listening, at the teacher’s feet, almost like a mendicant in need of everything. Marta puts the service first. Mary sets hearing to the Word in the center. Marta expresses with her work the affirmation of Jesus, who came not to be served but to serve. It is not about two opposing attitudes but on the contrary, two essential aspects of our Christian life. Aspects that never go separate but live in a deep and harmonious unity. Marta, with her generosity, makes everything she possesses available to others. Mary takes another step: she puts herself at the feet of Jesus with the attitude of the disciple.

In a Christian, the works of service and charity do not distance themselves from the primary source

of our action: that is, listening to the Word of the Lord.

HOLINESS IS NOT ONLY IN CONTEMPLATION

Let us not forget, either, the Gospel passage of the same Luke 7, 19-23. “At that time, John called two of his disciples and sent them to Jesus to ask him:” Are you the one who should come or should we wait for another? “They approached him and asked him: “John the Baptist has sent us to ask you if it is you who is to come or we should wait for another.” At that time, Jesus healed many of his diseases, illnesses and evil spirits and returned sight to many blind people. Then he gave them this answer: “Go and tell John what you have seen and heard: the blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are clean, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the good news is announced to the poor. And blessed is he who finds no reason for scandal in me. “It is interesting that to reveal himself; Jesus in a certain way “hides” himself within his work and the prophetic Scriptures that speak of him. In him, the promise of the liberation of the poor and the fulfillment of the prophecies is fully realized, represented by the texts that recall Isaiah 35, 5 and 61, 1.

In this great encounter between the Word and History, Jesus fully reveals himself as the Messiah awaiting like the Christ – that is, the Anointed – of God. The wait, therefore, ends.

Today we are reminded that only through an incessant encounter between the Word and History, Jesus Christ is revealed and given. Without these conditions, the risk is to reduce Christianity to an abstract catechism and a code of ethics heavy as a brick. Jesus continually emerges from the history of each time and place, in it the Scriptures illuminate and are enlightened with the fulfillment of his Gospel. Prayer and action are deeply united. A prayer that does not lead to concrete action... is a sterile and incomplete prayer. When in the ecclesial service, attention is paid only to the duty to do, then we give more importance to things, to functions, to structures, and we forget the centrality of Christ ... we serve ourselves and forget to serve God present in the brother in need. God is the God of the human heart. At the highest point of union with God, in addition to the experiences of contemplative ecstasy, there is placed a flow of real charity that pays attention to all the needs of others and which he calls the ecstasy of life and works.

THE SALESIAN EXPERIENCE OF HOLINESS

The words just quoted belong to Saint Francis de Sales, from whom Don Bosco drew inspiration for his journey to meet the Lord and who built the edifice of spirituality for all his children. He has used different words but with the same meaning and content. I remember some:

- Above all “Da mihi animas cœteratolle”, which proposes a way of seeing God and humanity: God as the term of each living; humanity as the highest expression of the Lord’s gift and offer. This word has an ascetic dimension. As the swimmer touches and leaves the water to advance on the waves, so the “tolle” emerges without being captured. It has a typical pastoral perspective in Don Bosco: it is the journey towards “holiness” seeking the detachment of things to dedicate itself to an operational and factual commitment of perfection. Father Rinaldi af-

firms: “It is the word of order that creates and multiplies heroism in the apostolate.”

- Another expression is “pastoral charity,” which unites contemplative love for God with operational commitment. This is how John Paul II describes it: “The essential content of pastoral charity is the gift of self, the gift of self to the Church, in the image and sharing of the gift of Christ ... It is not only what we do, but the gift of ourselves, which shows the love of Christ for his people.” Pastoral charity is our liturgy.

CONCLUSION

I refer, finally, to the words of Pope Francis: “Sometimes we have the temptation to relegate pastoral dedication and secular commitment to a second place as if they were “distractions “in the way of sanctification and of the inner peace. We forget that it is not that life has a mission but that it is a mission “. (n.27)

* SDB

Martha and Mary.

Refectory of the Aletti Center – Rome



THE NEW LIFE

Challenges for growth

by Anna Maria Musso Freni *



Against the false happiness that produce temporary things, ambition to possess, the disease of pessimism, **the road to happiness**, says Pope Francis, passes through the change of heart and conversion, which is not confined to vague purposes but that links the whole life.

Lent as a time of grace and invites us to open our eyes and our hearts to God and our brothers and sisters, to let the sufferings of others challenge ourselves. Prayer, fasting, almsgiving are the elements of the spiritual path towards Easter. They need to discover the need not to be dominated by appearance because the value of life does not depend on the approval that others give us or on success, but inner wealth.

Prayer is the strength of the Christian and every believer. It allows us to enter into communion with God, in a climate of filial trust that will enable us to experience its tenderness. The Pope insists on the need to have a constant prayer, which knows no

fatigue, so that good over evil may prevail. **A prayer that is a meditation on the Gospel**, which every Christian should always have with him “in his pocket”. So that he can open and read it at any time and in any place because Jesus has given a message for each circumstance, for each location and so as he spoke during his earthly life today he can also do it if we let him.

What can we say of a prayer that is often distracted and superficial, which tends to be, above all, of a petition, rather than praise and thanksgiving? Let us remember the advice of Don Bosco to his boys when he recommended them to stand before the presence of God, in a comfortable attitude, because prayer is also made with the eyes, with the hands, with the language of the body.

We can also resort to the teachings, for example, of the **Letters on Prayer written by Father Andrea Gasparino**. It begins with the reflection of the Our Father, recited slowly, meditating unhurriedly on the meaning of each word, starting from the concept of fatherhood and the images of tenderness, strength, security, evoked by the invocation “Father”. Our adjective extends the meditation to those who share this property with us: relatives, friends, loved ones and, above all, those unfriendly, those that inspire feelings of rejection. God is ours for all. “Your will be done” was a phrase that Dante explained: “In our will is our peace”: the acceptance of the



will of the Father is, for us, a source of security of joy. Father Gasparino invites us to transform the phrase: Thy will be done in this other: Make me your joy, nullifying my own will.

When we say, "Give us today our daily bread", our prayer should include those who have no food, work, dignity, who are rejected and marginalized in the name of absurd ideologies or fears.

According to Pope Francis, prayer must, first, immerse oneself in the mercy of God,

transmit the certainty that we can always be welcomed and forgiven because the greatest sin lies in the fear that we will be rejected by mercy. This also applies concerning others, when we ask the Father to forgive our sins as we forgive those who offend us.

The second element of the Lenten journey, fasting, identifies in the Bible the life of the prophets and that of Jesus. That it is not only the respect for certain formalities, such as the renunciation of meat on Fridays of Lent, or during the Holy Week; that is, preferably, a fast that makes us cultivate the style of the Good Samaritan who takes charge of the brother in difficulty. Let it become the choice of a sober lifestyle, which does not waste or discard, training the heart to essentiality and sharing. May fasting be converted into awareness, the assumption of responsibilities in the face of injustices and abuses committed, especially against the poor and the small.

The third element of the Lenten journey is almsgiving; it indicates gratuity because almsgiving is given to those who do not have the capacity to pay back. Train the generosity, the free experience of the gift, free from the obsession to possess, rid of the fear of losing what you have, of sadness and the calculation of not wanting to share your well-being with others. The path of



Lent leads, necessarily, to the Cross, crucial stage of the following of Christ; It is not the last stage because, after the darkness of the Friday of Passion, the dawn of Easter Day breaks. The steps that occur in this path go "making a path". With this image, the Pope takes up the evangelical images, like that of the candlestick that must be placed on top, or the leaven that makes the dough ferment, to remind the Christian that he cannot ignore his obligation to set an example. Therefore, "making a way" must be our commitment: **in the family**, favoring opportunities for dialogue and relationships of trust. **In creation**, living in close contact with nature, respecting people and things. **In the city**, called to be the yeast that ferments the dough, contributing to the common good. **In the Church**, keeping the flame of faith lit through prayer, the observance of the Commandments, the contemplation of God and the wonders of his love.

Let us preserve the courage to be creative, making a school of humanity, to train new men and women, to experience in first person the drama of the exodus and the gift. To walk against the current, when it must be done, always defending the call to a simple and homelike sanctity. The sanctity of closeness.

** Past Pupil Fed. Piemonte Maria Auxiliadora*

The way to Sanctity **A PILGRIM OF THE ABSOLUTE**

By the Editors

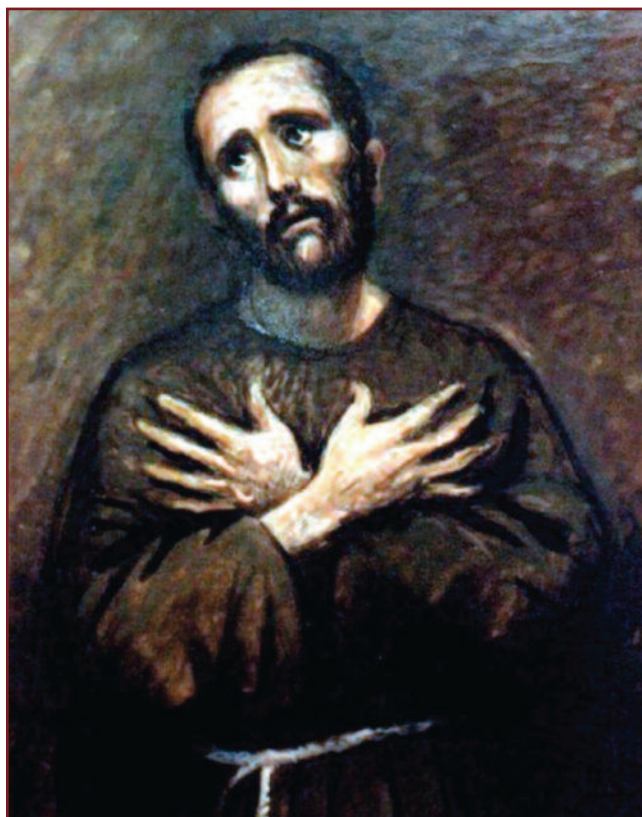
When we speak of Piedmont as the land of Saints, the thought immediately goes to the giants of the Spirit such as Saint John Bosco, Saint Joseph Cafasso and Saint Joseph Benito Cottolengo. In addition, other personalities of this region deserve to be recognized and valued. This is the case of a young man who lived in the late nineteenth century, Casimiro Barello, born in Cavagnolo (Turin), a small peripheral center of the Diocese of Casale Monferrato in the middle of the provinces of Turin, Asti, Alexandria and Vercelli. He was **declared Venerable in 2000 by Pope John Paul II**, the Cause of Beatification was accompanied by Father Pierluigi Cameroni, who recently brought to light a book entitled *"The Venerable Casimiro Barello, Pilgrim of the Absolute"* (Ed Velar). Thanks to **Caterina Benedetta Ferrero and Laura Pollino** we have the possibility of publishing some information about the future saint.

A short but intense life

CASIMIRO BARELLO was born on January 31, 1857, in the small village Casa Ostino de Covagnolo, in the bosom of a peasant family. He learned from his great-grandfather, grandmother and sick mother to seek God in prayer and recollection. He lived a normal childhood, helped with goodwill in the trades of the house and the field; in the periods when there was no agricultural work, he went to school. At the age of twelve, his mother died, and he dedicated himself with more perseverance to seek God, addressing with great faith the mother of Jesus. However, over time his faith was weakened. Between the ages of fourteen and sixteen, he fell into two serious and long illnesses. On those two occasions, God became present in his life by healing him through a special envoy: **The Virgin, who appeared to him as "a great woman dressed in light and clarity"** and invited him to give himself completely to God with a life of prayer and penance". In the autumn of 1874, having his father's consent, he left home.

Thus began his life as a pilgrim: a hard life, full of sacrifices, penances and humiliations, a life of continuous prayer and testimony. He walks and walks. He traveled barefoot throughout Italy, France, Spain and Portugal. He was in jail, was mistreated and stoned by those who considered him a vagabond and destitute; but he always remained serene: "Jesus was treated worse."

In Lanciano (Pescara) he became a Franciscan tertiary and replaced the sackcloth with the habit of a pilgrim. Of impressive aspect, clean in the middle



of the poverty, always smiling and affable, it left a sensation of peace on those who approached him. When he arrived at a populated place, he immediately went to the church and remained prostrate for many hours in adoration. "I am a poor ignorant – he said – and I only know the common prayers. I begin with the rosary; then the Lord deigns to enlighten me and call me to Yes; then, time passes so quickly, and my spirit remains absorbed and immersed in God, who gives me such

great joy that I cannot explain.” His love for God made him attentive to the needs of others. He was full of love and enthusiasm for the poor, the sick, the imprisoned, but, above all, he took care of the people who experienced sadness because they were far from God. “I want everyone to know God.” Casimiro felt “pilgrim of the Virgin” and felt for her a pleasant and confident affection. God had used her to call him, and Casimiro had “taken it with him”, as the apostle John. His earthly journey ended in Alcoy, where he died on March 9, 1884. In that Spain that had always welcomed him as a man of God, among those people who converted by just seeing him in prayer. Thousands of people came to his funeral, and his love was rewarded with extraordinary and numerous graces.

A figure to rediscover

On 9 and 10 November 2018, in Casale and Cavagnolo, Father Pierluigi Cameroni presented his new work.

In Cavagnolo, the event, sponsored by the Municipality, counted on the participation of the inhabitants of the place.

In Casale, the evening was presided by Monsignor Gianni Sacchi, Bishop of Casale Monferrato for a little over a year. For him, Casimiro Barello is, at present, a figure to rediscover, “I have discovered the person of the Venerable Casimiro when coming as bishop to the Diocese of Casale Monferrato and I am surprised at the essentiality of a life centered on prayer, Eucharistic adoration and attention to the sick and suffering [...]. Let us ask for the intercession of Casimiro for our young people, for our families and communities. The search for the Absolute also contaminates our time, because it has lost this horizon; and help us get out of the indifference and individualism in which we live today.”

Father Cameroni, on the other hand, emphasized the “joviality” of Casimiro: “Casimiro is a young man; he is a venerable young man. It has a strong message for young people because it has been a young man who has set out to search for God and has lived with this attitude [...].

From a young age, he gave himself totally to God; this recalls an expression of Don Bosco that said to his young people, “Give yourself to God completely!”

How much are we capable of inviting young

people to surrender to God completely? Casimiro is an arrow that points towards the Absolute.

Casimiro’s charism and mission are, precisely, to remember, that is, to place God in the heart. This is not little even in today’s world it is very topical.



“On the other hand, in the year 2001, the then bishop of Casale Monferrato, Monsignor Germano Zaccheo, had emphasized,” The testimony of Casimiro Barello represents a novelty in the history of modern Catholic hagiography. A young man, a layman, uneducated in the eyes of the world, without guides or human supports, embodies the perennial values of the Gospel with strength and radicalism. His mission is to make us return to God [...]. At a time when the first signs of secularization were beginning to appear [...].

It is a strong sign that today we are called to assume in personal and community prayer, asking him, pilgrim of the Absolute, to intercede for individual needs and our communities.

*Father Pierluigi Cameroni, postulator
S.E. Bishop Gianni Sacchi, Bishop of Casale Monferrato
Father Desiré, parish priest of Cavagnolo (Turin)
Father Giampio Bevasimi, vicar general*



Let's walk together

In the charism of the Founders



With the desire to welcome the invitation of Pope Francis to commit ourselves to the path of holiness, we continue our study of Article 4 of the Statute. This time we look at Don Bosco to draw on the source

by Gabriela Patiño *

The Spirituality of the Past Pupil of the FMA

The preventive system, the source of Spirituality

The spirituality of the Past Pupils of the FMA, says the Statute, is based on the Preventive System of Don Bosco that is expressed in the trinomial: “reason – religion – love”.

The figure and the meaning of Don Bosco and his work have been recognized historically and universally, and we are heirs of it. In the case of our beloved Past Pupils, this means strengthening the Christian identity to bear witness to it in contemporary society. You must bring the Good News of the Kingdom of God and accompany this announcement with the testimony of Christian life in an increasingly secularized, multicultural and interreligious society; all this, with the commitment to offer a better quality of life to all, especially to the poor and needy. There should not be any scope or context in which we did not have space for our testimony and mission. We give to the world the contribution of the values of the Salesian education. The Past Pupils become members of the Salesian Family on this foundation.

The practice of the Preventive System takes us to the center of Salesian Spirituality, which is pastoral charity. Don Bosco lived it as a search for the “glory of God and the salvation of souls”, which became for him a prayer and program of life, synthesized in the phrase *Da mihi animas, cœteratolle*. It is a charity that needs to be nourished from and to



lean on it, looking at the heart of Christ, imitating the Good Shepherd, meditating on his Word, living the Eucharist, giving space to personal prayer to dedicate himself to the service of children and young people, especially the poorest.

The Preventive System is not only a proposal of evangelization and pedagogical methodology, but it is also a spiritual experience. It finds its source in the love of God that accompanies each person with his presence and saves it by giving life; it disposes us to welcome God in the young and calls us to serve him in them, recognizing their dignity, renewing trust in their forces of good and educating them for the fullness of life. This is the reason why, as the Statute says, the Preventive System today is again proposed as a project

Let's walk together

of primary education that responds to the most authentic aspirations of the person: the search for the truth, the need of God, the openness to the relationship.

Transforming one's life in the light of Salesian spirituality to be good Christians and honest citizens, following in the footsteps of Don Bosco and Mother Mazzarello, is a goal that lasts a lifetime, leads to holiness and consents to each student to realize the dream of Don Bosco, based on his own words: "I await you all in Paradise."

Reading the history of the beginnings, we find that on the same day of the founding of the Association, Father Rinaldi gave the first Past Pupils of the Oratory the following spiritual program: "To live in the spirit of Don Bosco and spread it in a fraternal union with feelings of affectionate gratitude to the Superiors." The experience of the Spirit of Don Bosco is, therefore, a programmatic imperative present in the roots of the Association.

What attitudes or habits of your daily life reflect the Preventive System?

What elements of the spirit of Don Bosco would help you to be happier?

** Confederal Delegate*



**Father and Teacher of youth,
Saint John Bosco,
docile to the gifts of the Spirit
and open to the realities of your time,
you were to the young,
especially for the little
ones and the poorest,
a sign of God's love and predilection.**

**Be our guide on the path of friendship
with the Lord Jesus,
so that we discover,
in him and in his Gospel,
the meaning of our life
and the source of true happiness.**

**Help us to respond with generosity
to the vocation
that we receive from God,
to be in daily life
builders of communion
and collaborators with enthusiasm,
in communion with the whole Church,
of the construction
of the civilization of love.**

**Obtain for us the grace to persevere
in the experience
of a high measure
of Christian life,
according to the spirit
of the Beatitudes;
and may you,
guided by Mary Help
of Christians,
find us one day with
you in the great family
of heaven.
Amen**

*Pascual Chávez
Villanueva*

“She has done everything”

THE MONTSERRAT MONASTERY IN BARCELONA

by Maria Jsabel Pérez Aguilera *

There is a steep Mountain, very close to Barcelona, which shelters one of the most popular places of pilgrimage in Spain: **The Sanctuary of Our Lady of Montserrat.**

The mountains of Montserrat are a unique place in the world, both for their natural beauty and their mystical and legendary character. The Benedictine Monastery of Montserrat has more than a thousand years of history. It is a point of pilgrimage that some legends identify as the place of conservation of the Holy Grail.

From the twelfth century, pilgrims were attracted to the mountain to venerate the miraculous image of the Virgin of Montserrat (La Morenita).

According to Catholic tradition, St. Luke sculpted the image of the Virgin of Montserrat around 50 AD. and taken to Spain. It was hidden in a grotto (Santa Cova, the Holy Grotto), where it was rediscovered in 880 AD).

The history of the monastery is inextricably



linked to the account of the Virgin Negra, the Morenita, who is venerated there. The oldest document that narrates the legendary tradition of the rediscovery of the statue of the Mother of God

goes back to the year 1239, and the related story presents numerous analogies with many others that refer to images of this type. Also in the case of Montserrat, for example, the protagonists are two little shepherds who, one Saturday in the year 880, approaching the afternoon, were attracted by a brilliant light, coming from the sky, accompanied by a sweet melody. After supervising the environment, the two young men discovered an open grotto on the side of the mountain, in which



“She has done everything”

they found the image of the Virgin.

The bishop of the neighboring city of Mausera, knowing the prodigy, organized the transfer of the statue with a procession to the city; however, this transfer was impossible since the image became so heavy that it could not be moved. The miracle was interpreted as the firm intention, on the part of the Virgin, to be venerated in that place, in that mountain, and that was how the cult of the “Mare de Deu de Montserrat” began.



Trails for the excursion and a funicular take visitors to the Santa Cueva, where according to legend the image was rediscovered. The grotto is dated back to the seventeenth century and was built in the shape of a cross. In the Monastery, you can find many exciting things like the Museum of Montserrat, the Library and walking paths where you can breathe fresh air and walk with the children.

There is also the “Escolanía”, one of the oldest and most prestigious choirs in Europe, dating back to the thirteenth century. At 1:00 p.m., each day, you hear the singing of “Salve Regina” and “Virolai” (Anthem of Montserrat) in the Basilica.

The image, currently, is preserved in the sanctuary that was built in the twelfth century in poplar wood. The Virgin of Montserrat is the patron saint of Catalonia.

** Confederal Councilor*



The Association is Life

Witnesses of the identity

From **CONEGLIANO** (Italy) The reasons for a forever yes In Don Bosco and Mother Mazzarello: my promise as a Salesian Cooperator

by Michela Possamai *

On December 8, 2018, in the Church of the Immaculate Congregation of the FMA of Conegliano (Italy), by the grace of the Baptism received and with the joy of faith in Jesus, I promised fidelity to the charism of Don Bosco and Mother Mazzarello.

In an intense day, adorned with the emotion of pronouncing my “yes, here I am”, the Salesian Family welcomed me officially, in the same way as it has always welcomed me, for more than 40 years, in which I move in environments of the FMA and the SDB.

It was a unique experience to listen to what my heart suggested to me, in a fluid and soft way, while I was reading and sharing my public testimony, shocked by “feeling at home”. I addressed these words to the attendees after they asked me about the conscience with which I promised fidelity as a Salesian Cooperator.

“What they have learned, received, heard and seen in me, is what they should do. And the God of peace will be with you “(Phil 4, 9). What does God want from those who claim to believe in Him? God asks and wants fidelity to his Word, he wants coherence between what is said and what is lived; consistency between the values we proclaim as essential and the practice of these values in daily life: in the family, in interpersonal relationships, in the profession, in social and political commitment, in work in the Christian community and in the service.

What I feel and deeply move the commitment that I want to take today is gratitude and recog-



nition for what Mother Mazzarello and Don Bosco allowed me to live in this community and the environments of the FMA and the SDB for 40 years.

I received a lot. Thank you!

I want to contribute a lot.

“Do you want to do something good? Educate the youth. Do you want to do something holy? Educate the youth. Do you want to do something most holy? Educate the youth. Do you want to do something divine? Educate the youth. Moreover, among the divine things, this can be considered divine. If you help make these great assets a reality, you can be sure that you are safeguarding your soul.”

This is how Don Bosco expressed himself in 1878 at the first conference of Salesian Cooperators in Turin. Moreover, these same words today he addresses to me. Trusting in the help of Mary Help of Christians, of Mother Mazzarello and Saint John Bosco, I intend to collaborate in fact with this beautiful and great Salesian family who has loved me for so long. I will make concrete my commitment, based on the preventive system, of service in the education of young people.



In his exhortation *Gaudete et Exsultate*, Pope Francis bases our common daily incidence on the search for holiness, on the ordinary exercise of one's profession and the everyday experience of one's vocation. "Because the Lord has chosen each of us" to be holy and irreproachable before Him through love (Eph 1: 4).

I decided to offer at the altar, creatively, because we have not used it – a friend of mine made me think of it –, the text of our Constitution of the Italian Republic. That way we can remember the task of what an honest citizen consists of, "remove the economic and social obstacles that, limiting, in fact, the freedom and equity of citizens, impede the full development of the human person [...]"

Those of us who contribute to the salvation of those young people that we are meeting along the way we cannot exempt ourselves from having a well-defined scale of values based on the spirit of service and relationship with others, especially with the poorest in resources and spirit.

Let us trace a path to those who have lost their north or who have lost hope, and our society risks exploiting, consumed in its silent solitude.

To try to be that "saint of the next door", of whom Pope Francis already spoke, I feel called to incarnate the Gospel and the Salesian charism in the current context, with its risks, its challenges and its opportunities.

In this way I give thanks to life, bearing witness to the good received: "to make it grow and make it known" as Don Bosco would ask me if I met him today.

** Salesian Cooperator
Local Center Colegio Inmaculada Conegliano*



From **CATANIA** (Italy) 50 years after graduation, yesterday and today

By the Past Pupils

On October 24, the day on which the year of activities of the Past Pupils of the Auxilium Unions began. We met to make a reality of the proposal to meet again at the Mary Help of Christians Institute and celebrate 50 years of our graduation. The meeting was moved by strong and positive feelings when it came to “remembering” those moments lived in the environment that saw us grow until we reached maturity. Reliving the years of study, between one lesson and another, the occasions of crisis, the opportunities for formation, becomes an occasion to give glory and praise to God now that we are adults. Together with the thanksgiving to God, our recognition to so many people who were on our way and who became points of reference and bright beacons that radiate good. We are proud to have attended the Institute of the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians because they favored us with a complete formation and instilled in us a “value system” consistent with the project of personal life, as a synthesis of culture, professionalism, experience and faith. Therefore, we decided to continue to come to the Association, participating in the monthly meetings of prayer and reflection of the Word, in tune with the liturgy of each day, in the moments of celebration and fraternity to-



gether with the ADMA Association and the Salesian Cooperators. All this we do with the certainty of reliving a dynamic reality typical of family. We experience in the daily commitments, both in the family and in the community, the presence of Mary Help of Christians that makes us more similar to Christ and available to announce it with a life of witness and happiness. The promise of the Virgin to Don Bosco comes to mind: “It is enough for a young man to enter my house and I immediately cover him with my cloak”. We have this certainty: She is our “traveling companion” she protects us on the path of life with motherly solicitude. She holds us with strong roots, and thus we have the security of being able to look towards the horizon with optimism.



From **VARESE** (Italy) Meeting again gladdens the heart! A party prepared with love

From Verese, an article about the feast of September 30, on the anniversary of the profession of our Salesians Sisters and an open letter of thanksgiving to Sr. Augusta Isella, as a testimony of kindness, joy and spiritual fruitfulness.

On Sunday, September 30, 2018, Sister Isella, invited by the Community and the Past Pupils to Casa de Casbeno, in Varese, where she worked from 1977 to 2004, even as a delegate, renewed the vows that have accompanied her for 50 years following the path to the Lord. It was a grand celebration since the anniversaries of religious profession of all the Salesians of the house were celebrated: Sr. Armanda and Sr. Ana also with their 50 years of religious life; Sr. Carla and Sr. Magdalena, 60 years, and the 70 years of Sr. Emilia and Sr. Rosilena. The preparations began in August, paying attention to each individual, with the approval of the Animator Sr. Gemma Paganini and the perfect coordination of our delegate Sister Petronila Colombo. For this reason, the party was a success and reinvigorated the hearts of both the honorees and all present.



Different people of different ages – former students and supporters – wanted to join the celebration of the religious ceremony presided over by Father Pierluigi Zuffetti, Salesian, and animated by the choir “Mary Aux” of our Federation, under the direction and accompaniment with the organ of the expert Clara Mazzetti. During the Holy Mass, the sisters renewed their vows, confirming their own consecration of fidelity to the Eternal Love. In addition to the liturgical songs could not miss the Anthem of the Past Pupils, written and played by four hands by Sr. Augusta and Clara. A delightful surprise was the arrival of the commemorative letter, sent by the archbishop of Milan, Monsignor Mario Delpini, who joined the joy of the day with his blessing for each of the Salesians. The holiday continued in the event hall where it was prepared – thanks to the CIOFS boys, coordinated by Sr. Daniela Luoni – delicious refreshments and snacks to end the day “in glory”. Photos, conversations, confidences, the joy of being reunited after so many years, and a lot of hip, hip, hip, hurray! The commemorative toast encouraged the large crowd. Particularly



The Association is Life

striking were Sister Augusta's words when the cake was shared. With the delicacy and humility that distinguish us, she told us "I have learned a lot from the Past Pupils". Then, she added an acknowledgment and gratitude "because reuniting makes the heart happy!" At the end of her speech, she invited us "to meet more frequently because in the community the spirit is revitalized and the enthusiasm is regenerated". We are eternally grateful for these words. With the mutual promise of keeping in touch with each other in prayer, each one returned home with the freshness and fidelity of the Salesian spirit in their hearts.

A heart with Salesian pulsations

The gratitude of a Past Pupil

Dear Sister Augusta,

I saw you, by chance, amid a sad event in my life: the death of my mother. A letter of yours, expressing closeness as a delegate of the Past Pupils, gave me the desire to meet you in person.

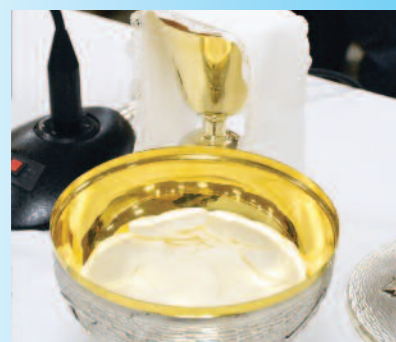


A shy meeting, a meeting full of Salesian heart that reminded me a lot of what I had when I attended the teacher's school. A meeting, ours that laid the foundations of a solid friendship that has lasted for 15 years. A young friend, sensitive friend, dear Sister Augusta, you have been and continue to be my support, even spiritual, who can read in my deepest wounds the language of my being. A Salesian friend who offers her life every day to Him who sometimes "plays" hide and seek, who sometimes does not clearly outline his project in each one of us. In all the moments of difficulty, you have been present, dear friend. With your discretion, with your intelligence to know how to put you aside and that He acts. And, above all, with your constant prayer! For that, THANK YOU personally, Sister Augusta. Thank you! May Mary Help of Christians and Don Bosco accompany you always on your path and always keep your heart with Salesian pulsations.

Signed: "Your little girl".

MAKE MEMORY

**On March 31 and April 30,
Holy Mass for the Past Pupils,
the FMA and relatives deceased
in these months.**



From **CIVITAVECCHIA** (Italy) ... “Then you cross the street”

by Anna Elia *

120 years of the FMA's presence in Civitavecchia have been celebrated! It is a beautiful occasion that we observed with joy; we thought of commemorating this date together with the Salesians who celebrated their “first 90 years” this year (they are young!). The Institute of the FMA and that of the Salesians are very close; it is enough to cross the street that, not coincidentally, is called “Vía San Juan Bosco”. The Salesians arrived in Civitavecchia in October 1898. They opened the School of San Nicolas again and dedicated it to Santa Sofia, protector of the benefactor who most helped in this mission: Mrs. Sofia Mariani. The “Sisters of Don Bosco”, as they were called, later moved, in 1929, to a larger headquarters called Villa Siri, where the Santa Sofia Institute is currently located. The female universe of this city, almost in its entirety, has passed through our Institute: from early childhood school to primary school, which since 1898 has been working without interruption.

Always looking to the future, in the post-war period the Institute welcomed boarded children who were protected by ENAOLI, the Italian body that took care of orphaned children, also dedicated to teaching professional courses and, above all, to the management of the Oratory. Even today, it is a continual coming and going of voices, a mixture of laughter and enthusiasm, careers, games and desire to be in community. The joy that the Salesians imprint, witnessed and preached by Mother Mazzarelli, becomes, over time, a favorite way to communicate with God through the kindness of the look, the word, the gesture, creating the family atmosphere that is perceived entering any Salesian house. Since 1913, the Union of Past Pupils has been active, and in 1933, in Villa Siri, they held their first annual Congress. Our identity as Past

Pupils goes back to our childhood, to our family, as simple as full of love, to our Oratory where we grew and breathed that “*mornesino*” air that we carry inside and makes us happy to be together, although many times we do not know how to explain. Nevertheless, we are also happy with little, as we take advantage of even the smallest opportunities to meet and share in goodwill. Our fraternity dinners, our leisure activities, the carnivals, the social days, the workshops and the animation of the Oratory, our formation meetings and, especially, the 24th of each month dedicated to our Mother Mary Help of Christians, are strong moments and necessary in our associative life. Everything we do is aimed at “giving” generously to those who need it and not only from the material point of view. The current Council made up of Annalia Matteo, Anna Maria Tarantino, Maria Geggi, Annamaria Donati, Colomba Petix, Beatrice Geggi, meet every month. They convey to the members the orientations and directives of the Federation Council (our San Juan Bosco Federation), and programs of the different activities. We are assisted by our delegate, who is at this time is the Animator, Sr. Lucia, who has the priority of providing formative and spiritual accompaniment to all the Associates.

* Vice President Roman Federation S. Inés

**120 years of presence of
the FMA in Civitavecchia!
An occasion to celebrate!**



From **ALÍ TERME** (Italy)

The Church of Mary Help of Christians Dedicated as a Shrine

by Dalila Maria Virzi *

The chapel of the “Mary Help of Christians” Institute, where the relics of **Mother Magdalena Morano**, patron of the catechists and educators of the Diocese of Messina, are kept for the twenty-fourth anniversary of her beatification (November 5, 1994), was erected on December 8, 2017 as a diocesan Sanctuary with dedication to Mary Help of Christians. The creation of the sanctuary was decreed by S.E. Monsignor Giovanni Accolla, metropolitan archbishop of the archdiocese of Messina-Lipari-Santa Lucia del Mela and proclaimed by the archbishop’s secretary, the presbyter Gianluca Monte. Numerous Salesian and diocesan priests celebrated the celebration. The chants of the celebration were in charge of the organist of the Cathedral of Messina, Father Giovanni Lombardo, and were intoned by the choir of the “Educating Community”.

Mother General Sr. Yvonne Reungoat was present, who arrived at the town of Alí Terme on Sunday, November 4, receiving a welcome greeting from the public in Plaza Prestia, and the institutional greeting of Mayor Aliese Carlo Giaquinta, and other mayors of neighboring towns. After these ceremonial acts, the delegation went on foot to the Institute where a prayer vigil was held.



The Animator of the house, Sister María Catena Lo Turco, addressed the bishop, the civil, religious and military authorities at the beginning of the celebration. They were also present: the visiting counselor, Sr. MarijaPece, who was doing the canonical visit; the Provincial Sr. María Ana PisciottaMazzucco. In addition to numerous religious and civil authorities, a representative of the Past Pupil of the FMA Council of Catania, and outstanding numbers of Past Pupils, Salesian Co-operators, priests, religious, faithful and young people from all over Sicily. We emphasize in a special way the presence of Professor Rosita Alberti.

During the homily, the archbishop, after exalting the human, moral and religious virtues of Mother Morano, showed that *“The Shrine is constituted, above all, by an existential reality of the people of God; in it the supernatural and human dimensions concur. It is a sacred place where the faithful, for a particular reason of piety, approach many on a pilgrimage, with the approval of the Ordinary of the place (‘‘canon 1.230).’’In the sanctuaries, the means of salvation must be abundantly provided to the faithful, diligently preaching the Word of God and fostering the liturgical life with great care through the celebration of the Eucharist and of penance, and by practicing other ap-*



proved forms of popular piety. (Canon 1.234, paragraph 1). The one who makes a pilgrimage to a Shrine is the one who makes an itinerary; who makes an itinerary has a point of departure and a point of arrival. If the Sanctuary is the place of a presence, of a memory, of a celebration, of a meeting, of a growth, it can be the point of arrival of the pilgrim; but, immediately becomes the point of departure, because God has not revealed himself only in that consecrated place but all life is sacred to the Lord and from there that divine life is spread to make holy everything that the pilgrim will find. In this way, he will consecrate all the opportunities and actions that he will live; he will recognize the sacredness of the presence of God in the heart of each brother ...”

After the celebration, Mother General Sister Yvonne, after thanking the authorities and the faithful present, made the discovery of a commemorative plaque of this event together with the mayor, Dr. Carlos Giaquinta.

The recently erected Sanctuary of Ali Terme will be the sixth Salesian shrine in the world, closely linked to the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians: three are in Latin America, one in Nizza Monferrato and the other in Mornés.

** President of the Sicula Federation, Palermo*



From **ALMAGRO BUENOS AIRES** (Argentina) Celebrating the Past Pupil's Day with Mary Help of Christians

by Natalia Kidd *

While preparing the "day of the Past Pupil", the members of the committee agreed that all the work that involved "reuniting" with the Help of Christians at home was offered as a prayer; also, as an opportunity to remember those wonderful years of adolescence. The goal was to revitalize our strength to live in the daily life the Salesian charism that we inherited in this house. We want to share the emotions of that day in the House of the Virgin on the day of Past Pupil.

On October 28, we celebrated the day of the Past Pupil at the MaríaAuxiliadora School in Almagro, in Buenos Aires Argentina. Although every year we celebrate this festivity, this time there are special dates such as the gold and silver weddings of some the Past Pupils, among them me, completing 25 years since my graduation with my classmates. What always remains is the joy of being reunited as friends, with the Salesians, the teachers, the house, and with our Mother Help of Christians. Concluding Holy Mass, generally, we make a kind of "competition" to see who arrives first at the altar or in front of the image of the Virgin in the courtyard: She always occupies the central position in the photographs!

This year new members of the Union of Past Pupils of the Soler Street School joined us. It was a beautiful gesture of "familiarity". The Eucharist was presided over by Father Jorge Blanc, Salesian; Fifty years ago, it was he, precisely, who preached the spiritual exercises to the "fifth-year girls" who now celebrated their golden jubilees as graduates. The priest gave us a beautiful homily on the Sunday Gospel, with the invitation to ask the same question



to all the people we meet along the way, the same question of Jesus to the blind Bartimaeus: "What can I do for you?" He encouraged us to realize, in our lives, what Jesus wants for each one of us. Beyond our weaknesses, we have a personal identity built on our way through the house of the Help of Christians. What we are and our whole life is what we offer to God, renewing the associative



commitment on days like this. I was especially moved when one of my companions approached the altar carrying the offerings as a sign of personal and community life for which we thank the Lord. I also consider how valuable is the diversity in the life each Past Pupil who makes their way with their vocation, their charisma, and their projects. What do we have in common? That we are all the fruit of the same seed, that we have the identical DNA that has always enlightened us in our choices and actions, even though we are not always aware of it.

I think that this seed, which passes from generation to generation, is the same spirit of Mornese: the seed of humility and Salesian joy, family atmosphere, fraternity and friendship, love of Jesus and the Virgin. We come from this seed with deep Sale-



sians roots. We make grateful memory of so many people who have planted in us good values and offer to God the fruit that we are today and the seeds that we spread around us. All this richness is what we celebrate, each year, together with the Virgin Help of Christians. THANK YOU!

* Pupil



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Hands in the world

Commitment without borders

Hi, my name is Carla. I am a Past Pupil from Vallecrosia – Past Pupil of Sr. Margarita Maderni. I will take a little of your time to tell you something, to share a few pictures of my stay in Africa. By a happy coincidence, since the Lord wanted to listen to my old wish, I landed in **BANGUI, capital of the CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC**, precisely in the place where Pope Francis opened the Holy Door. At that time, as before, the airport was utterly militarized: small and crowded; many military, missionaries and cooperators; So many suitcases and bags of all sizes. The heat was suffocating, and there was a heavy air in the surroundings. After three hours, they allowed us to leave. The driver moved quickly. He went out, through the first gate, and then he took the long straight street, of dry earth, without dodging any holes.

- Where there are no gaps there can be mines
- We must go quickly and not stop; otherwise, they will kill us. Then we will go to the National Guard and denounce what happened.
- Hold strong!

GOOD MORNING, AFRICA!

by Carla *

Two experiences; one at school and one at the infirmary. At the school, I taught and cooked. For five days a week, I managed to ensure that the children had at least one meal a day, rice and canned sardines or spaghetti or mashed potatoes.

He had few rules in the kitchen: look well before taking a pot following the belief that snakes could make a nest there, also opened once a day the freezer thinking that if opened several times the heat could thaw food.

If it rained very hard, it was necessary to remain alert because it was possible that someone from the community came to steal the food reserves. Sleeping with tranquility was difficult. Any noise put us on guard; the red spiders came out of the shower pipes, and the mice ran through the ceiling. About the mice: one day, a guard's wife went to clean up and triumphantly came out with a hook with giant mice, strung there and ready for dinner: anything that moves is good to eat! I often thought that I was taken back in time, to the Medieval Age. The paralyzed children in four wooden boards dragged by the earth and pushed by another child, old women, blind, probably because they have eaten all the life only cassava (yucca) with residues of arsenic, sit-



ting at the side of the roads, an asking for alms that seldom comes.

Moreover, I do not want to mention the prisons, which I never dared to enter. It was enough to see the prisoners with their naked torso, with an iron belt in their body attached to a thick chain that prevented them from escaping, connected to a central stick. Many other stories that maybe it is better not to tell.

Then I went to work in the infirmary; HIV tests, cerebral malaria (that is what they call them because, if you do not heal in three days, the person dies).

One day, a missionary father arrived with a paralyzed child whom the mice, in their hut, had begun to bite precisely because he did not feel pain. I gave him a bath, healings; I gave him medicine and clothing.

A brilliant child, may God protect him forever. On another occasion, a woman arrived who appeared to be pregnant but actually suffered from tuberculosis. She followed treatment for her cure, both with medicines and with a proper diet; finally, we helped her to buy a machine to process cassava, and this enabled her to attain some income and survive.

The Salesians that I met, leaders of that community, are always in danger and are true ROCKS for their strength.

In our country, we cannot imagine the difficulties that they experience as consecrated women who witness to Christ in environments with animistic thoughts, where spiritualism is widespread. We often think of them and pray for their needs. Greetings to all and a warm hug.

** Former student of the Liguria Federation*

A CONFERENCE ROOM IN HER MEMORY

Auxilia, a very generous woman

In a brief but intense ceremony was inaugurated, in the architectural ensemble of the parish of **Corosino, in the province of Taranto**, a room dedicated to the native **Auxilia Luppulo**, recently deceased after a fulminating illness that definitively removed her from the entire community. The dedication of this place to the memory of Auxilia, at the desire of the parish priest, Father Filippo Urso, was made to remember and leave a lasting testimony of her altruism, always generous, capable of linking everyone with great courage, determination and enthusiasm; she was always sustained by a strong faith and total trust in Jesus. Despite the sadness, caused by her departure, great joy was experienced among those present. Who knew and had occasion to approach Auxilia, will recognize in her the values and teachings of a good Christian, will assume her example of generosity to others, especially the sick. All these examples will remain present in the community forever, not only thanks to the commemorative room but, above all, thanks to the testimony of many parishioners who were close to her. Auxilia Luppulo was a real and great human being to her family and her community: She will never be forgotten.



Extracted from Floriano Catani's article

There are only two **KIDS**

by Alessandro Ciquera *

Hammoud and Khaled are two children of six and eight years, come from a village in the district of Houla, in Syria, who lived the siege of the Syrian army and the Allied militias, for seven years. They have lived many winters. They have a talking, lively look that conveys security. While they tell their story in detail, they go from moments of spontaneity to moments of silence and shyness, in which they recall that world, built of pain and nightmare. How much space there may be in a child's head! Their imagination is a powerful instrument that makes senses and narratives that even an adult could not achieve. As if in a hurry they tell their experiences with planes and the noise of bombs, how they lean before the bombing, how bullets and helicopters are. They lived those years in Houla; his father had built a shelter inside the room, and he accessed it by passing through a rug placed on the floor. A secret world that describes you as if it were a hidden place, a story you should be proud of, an adventure to share.

A shadow passes quickly over their faces when

they must talk about the bomb that fell in their home, destroying everything that was around them. They talk again, in a hurry, about the explosion, the cries of a cousin, the Koran powdered by lime, the bloodied aunt, and the strong hands that took them out of that dark pit before the civil protection of the province arrived. During those days, they ate leaves and cat meat; they cooked the herbs they found on the street. After the first few years, his family failed to cultivate the lands located outside the village because of the danger posed by snipers loyal to the government who wanted to starve the revolted population. They speak of people burned alive and of the confessional massacre suffered by 110 martyrs, put to the knife or beaten with instruments of work, as if they were animals in the slaughterhouse, without mercy. The piety disappeared from Syria but still lives in the eyes of two lost and confused children who enjoy telling their story to those who wish to stop and listen to it in Tel Abbas.

* Former M. Mazzarello Union Via Cumiana – Turin



Reading is an adventure

The man watching the trains go by

By Georges Simenon

by Lorenzo Trapassi *



Any man, a typical family, a city like any other in Europe on the eve of World War II. A life without ambitions and without great distractions, ordinary, almost gray, like the sky that is often the backdrop in the novels of Georges Simenon. This could describe the existence of Mr. Kees Poppinga, exemplary family father, a model official of a Dutch company and protagonist of the book "The man who watched trains go by", considered one of the masterpieces of twentieth-century police literature. All this until one day the company goes bankrupt, the owner disappears to evade credit and Mr. Poppinga discovers that life, boring and unforeseen, is not worth it. From one day to the next, the Poppinga surname begins to be visible to the newspapers and its photographs pass through the hands of the police of half Europe. Now, the hours of the protagonist's day will not be marked by office habits or family responsibilities but by trains that must be addressed, here and there, to erase any trace that allows to find him, as well as by nightclubs and by young ladies. Companions who animate the nights of Paris since the late thirties. "The man who watched trains go by" is much more than a good thriller. We are facing an excellent example of psychological introspection: the plot, which contains a conspiracy, in turn, focuses on the in-



ner dimension of the protagonist, who is in search of a new identity. Broken the point of union with the past, with the customs and ties that identify the petty bourgeois life of Kees and the entire Poppinga family. The protagonist ventures into an entirely new existence, seeking a new self and the re-conquest of freedom of action and thought, through a series of transgressions and crimes thanks to which, he barely manages to explain to himself some causes of his behavior. The novel, published in 1938, was first translated, into Italian in 1952, the first in a successful series of editions that subsequently appeared in this and other countries. Good reading and do not miss the train, KeesPoppinga is preparing to flee!

* Past Pupil of Rome

The author



Very popular among readers around the world and recognized master of suspense, the Belgian writer in French, Georges Simenon (1903-1989) was, for a long time, despised by literary criticism. The significant number of novels published by the Author, often using pseudonyms, should not make us think that the quantity of works is detrimental to their quality. Read to believe!

Family be what you are

Explore the world of relations



Third Critical element: The Family with young adults

by Raffaella Messina *

The “family, trampoline of nails”, is the family that lives the stage of having **adult children who gradually go to live outside the nucleus of origin**. In many contexts of northern European families, the State actively participates in supporting the independence of young people through a series of economic aids and incentives for entrepreneurship and independence activities. In many countries, like ours, there is no state support, and the children leave the parents' house only when they finish their studies, have a job or, in most cases, when they get married. To the economic difficulties is added the fact that, at this historical moment, one of the challenges on the part of young adults is to define a project of their own. Young people, nowadays, do not know what they want to do “when they grow up” and they are slow to define a life plan, also, because the families of origin do not make particular emphasis on achieving independence. In the long term, all this is leading to a phenomenon known as generational stagnation in which the new generation does not progress, and this affects the whole family.

The commitments and difficulties of this stage are:

1. To leave the father's house. Young adults must leave home and pursue their life project based on their identity, their specialties and their talents.

Typical difficulties. The commitments and challenges of this stage are: In the preceding phase (the family that has an adolescent child), it may be that the young man has not completed his task of building his own identity due to an excess of authoritarianism that prevented him from defining his own rules and values. Also, it may be due to an excess of laxity that may have left the adolescent alone in the face of the need to be encouraged and stimulated in the understanding of what is the goal he pursues in his life.

2. **Giving realization to one's own identity** is necessary.

At this stage, children, already adults, need to translate in a concrete way, with facts and actions, their own life project, for example, invest in their own academic formation, find work or start an entrepreneurial activity,

build relationships that are significant, move to places where they can reside and find a better future, etc.

Typical difficulties. If the children have not built their own identity in the previous phase, they will be confused at this stage and will not be able to identify a life project of their own. They can act in an erratic, contradictory, inconstant or counterproductive way. Sometimes you can get discouraged and want to “throw the oars” being adrift in the boat, without trying desires even to decide to realize their expectations.

3. **Offer the necessary help to achieve autonomy.** The task of the parents is to favor the children so that they pursue their project of autonomous life. This help is understood, at the material level, for example, by helping the children economically, in their plans of professional realization or sustaining them while they complete their period of study. At the psychological level, the help is aimed at recognizing the adult condition and the authority that the children must develop; In other words, children need to be recognized for their autonomous ability to manage their own lives, to define their priorities, to choose their partner, etc.

Typical difficulties. The parents, sometimes, do not help (or even hinder) the process of the children to disassociate themselves from them and do not recognize them as adults but continue to consider them as children. From the material point of view, parents hinder this stage when they do not help to finance (even though they can) those life projects of the children that do not meet their expectations; or, also, they could help their own children only ambivalently, help them alone to study or work on something that they like.

4. **Rediscover the couple.** The house is empty when the children leave, and the couple discovers themselves alone, beyond their role as parents, which often wears out. The couple needs to rediscover themselves, to cultivate a dimension of emotional (and physical) intimacy again, to share times and spaces again.

* Psychologist, Salesian Past Pupil

The Third Millennium

The present that is already the future

THE WOMEN WHO HAVE CHANGED HISTORY

Women of the present and the past, of whom there is much talk but little is known

by Cristiana Mariani

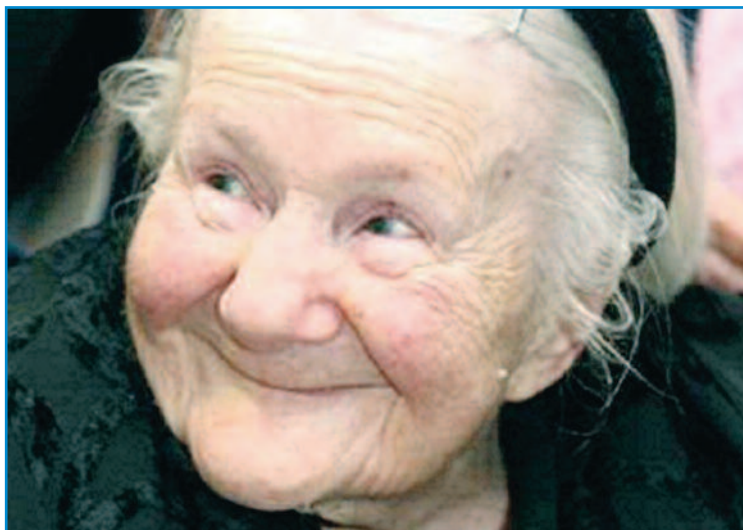
IRENA SENDLER

This is a story, perhaps forgotten, among many others that have to do with the terrible circumstances of the Nazi extermination (Shoah). Irena Sendler said: "Every child saved with my help is the justification of my existence on this earth; it is not a title of glory." However, her gesture puts her with enough merit in the list of women who "have changed history" struggling to find even a small trace of humanity in inhuman circumstances.

The story of Irena Sendler had been ignored for many years until in 1999 three students from a school in Kansas, encouraged by her teacher, brought it to light through a play: "Life in a jar".

Who was Irena Sendler? She was born in Warsaw (Poland) in 1910. When World War II broke out, she was working as a nurse and social assistant in the sanitary department of the Warsaw Municipality. Educated in a Catholic environment but with a socialist tradition, she had a close relationship with the Jewish community since childhood, a situation that was not so obvious in a country very affected by secular anti-Semitism.

He entered the Polish Democratic Youth Association and the Polish Socialist Party. In the university, she was an activist against discrimination against Jewish students and for this reason, she was suspended for three years. As a social worker in the municipal administration, **from 1939 to 1942 she helped many Jewish families living in Warsaw** flee from death through the offer of false documentation. Later she was part of the Council of Aid to the Jews, founded in December 1942 and better known by the name of Żegota, a clandestine group of Poles and Jews, which was active until January 1945. **When in November of 1940 the Nazis imprisoned the Jews in the ghetto,** Irena obtained



from the municipality of Warsaw permission to enter to research infectious diseases that were spreading rapidly because of overpopulation (more than 400,000 people in a tiny area) and precariousness in hygienic conditions. Even the Nazi occupation gave consensus for that investigation, fearing that the epidemic could affect them. In the ghetto, Irena always wore a Star of David as a sign of solidarity but, also, as a strategy not to attract attention. Her freedom of movement allowed her to dedicate herself in a unique way to the service of children, and she managed to get many of them out of there by finding ingenious solutions. The children were sedated and hiding in bags to make them look like they were killed by typhus. They were also buried in bloodied clothing inside ambulances. They were



YAD VASHEM is the monument that the State of Israel has dedicated to the victims of the Extermination (Shoah), created in 1953 to document and transmit the history of the Jewish people during those years of persecution. In this way they have managed to preserve the memory of each of the 6 million victims; also, in this way, they have highlighted the work of many non-Jews of different nations who risked their lives to defend them; the list of friends, until January 1, 2018, reached 26,973 people. “Yad-Vashem” is drawn from the Word of God and is referred to in the text of Isaiah 56: 5: “I will grant my house and, within my walls, a memorial and a name (YadVashem) ... I will give you an eternal name that will never end.” The choice of the name has a precise intention: to give an eternal name to all the victims that, otherwise, would be erased from memory. The structure and spatial organization of the museum – a star of David cut in half representing the decimated European Jewish people – eloquently reflects the purpose of remembering each, deceased or tortured, during the Shoah.

Yad Vashem - The dome of the room where the photographs and the names of the victims of the Shoah are kept.

even hidden in boxes of utensils that were transported in the trucks of a technician in the municipality who had in the back seat his dog trained to bark when he perceived the presence of Nazi soldiers so that the crying of the little ones could go unnoticed. When they were “liberated”, the children were assigned to families of peasants, sent to Catholic convents or hidden in local houses.

The sources consider that with this strategy **2,500 children could be saved**. Irena even had the delicacy of keeping a list of

the real names written next to the false ones she buried in her garden in glass jars or other containers, hoping that one day the children could reunite with their parents. Precisely, the play of young girls from Kansas refers to these jars or containers used by Irena. After the war, the lists were delivered to Adolf Berman, president of the Jewish Committee for social aid. Nearly 2,000 children were identified; unfortunately, the vast majority of parents had died in the extermination.

“My work ended here – Sandler affirmed – I do not remember their names and they never knew mine. All this was essential for the safety and integrity of all. For them, I was only “AunticJolanta”, my pseudonym.

Despite having taken all precautions, in October 1943, Irena was arrested by the Gestapo and



I DO NOT WASTE *I REFUSE*

subjected to brutal torture to denounce. These tortures would cause permanent damage to her legs. Condemned to death, she was imprisoned in the Pawiak prison, from which she left thanks to the large sum of money with which Zegota bought the silence of the Nazi officer who was guarding her. After this, she had to live in hiding, under the name of Klara Dabrowska.

The end of the Second World War did not mean a return to normality. Despite having been reinstated to her offices in social services, however, she was considered subversive and was under the supervision of the Communist Security Service with the accusation that she favored, from the underground, the members of the Partisan Army. Due to her solidarity activity of rescue of children during the years of war, her children – although born when the conflict had already ended – could not register or attend the University of Warsaw. Since 1948, she was part of the Unified Polish Workers Party which she left in 1968, as a sign of protest for the repression of students and workers demonstrations but also due to the violent anti-Semitic campaign orchestrated by the communist government. From YadVashem she was assigned recognition as a Righteous of Nations, on October 19, 1965. Precisely, in her honor, the first tree was planted in 1983 at the entrance of the path of the Righteous. In 1991, she received Israeli's honorary citizenship.

She died on May 12, 2008, in Warsaw; and was buried in the Polish cemetery of the city. No more intimate news about her character or her customs is found in her biographies, but it is not difficult to imagine the strength and determination of this woman who did extraordinary things in everyday life.

SOURCES: <http://it.pearson.com/>;
<http://www.enciclopediadelledonne.it>

Single-use plastic items such as plates, cutlery or cotton swabs make up more than 70% of the waste that is found in the sea. The effects, unfortunately, are very evident, which is why you should pay immediate attention to solving this problem. According to the European Commission, this percentage of plastic materials is slowly decomposed and is found in the seas, oceans and beaches around the world. Plastic waste affects marine species, especially turtles, seals, whales, fish and crustaceans. It also affects birds and, therefore, the entire food chain.

Before the year 2021, cotton swabs, cutlery, plates and any plastic utensils will be eliminated from daily life in the European Union, responding to the plan approved by the Commission for the environment and public health. They may be marketed only to the extent that they are manufactured with sustainable materials. The list of dangerous products for the sustainability of the environment is extended. They will be banned: plastic bags, biodegradable plastic products and containers for fast food made of polyethylene. According to the information provided by the European Union, the Member States must reduce even the use of many other articles, for which there is no alternative, in an “ambitious and durable” way before 2025.

Faced with this “apocalyptic” scenario, there is no shortage of those who seek to remedy through the invention of new materials.



The Third Millennium

Potato starch and water to produce BAGS AND UTENSILS 100% environmentally friendly

A young Swedish industrial design student found a way to reduce plastic consumption by using potatoes. His solution to the problem is called “potato plastic”, an alternative and biodegradable plastic, composed with vegetable bases, designed especially for the fast food industry because it decomposes in 2 months and it could even be eaten.

His name is Pontus Törnqvist; he is 24 years old, born in Göteborg and student of Industrial Design.



His “potato plastic” consists of a material made from potato starch and water. The compound heats up when the liquid condenses. Then, it is placed in the molds and heated until it becomes solid. “According to the liquid deposited in a mold, the material can be thick and resistant or a simple, subtle film - explains Pontus. This idea responds to the fact that nowadays plastic cutlery is manufactured and decomposes in 450 years, knowing that the real period of use is 20 minutes, causing damage to the environment and to entire generations”.

There is also the fantasy of reuse, therefore in that respect, there are some examples.

WHAT IS NEEDED TO DEVELOP A PENCIL HOLDER?

Scalpel, scissors, an empty detergent bottle (it can also be a disinfectant bottle or an aromaterizer). The container is placed horizontally, and half of the bottom part is cut (lengthwise) paying attention that the cut stops 2 centimeters from the handle (you can see the photo to understand better). The bottle can be placed in a vertical position (upside down, as in the image) and fastened to the wall with glue or a nail. It can also be left directly on the desk. The thicker detergent containers can be, at the same time, transformed into magazine containers. There are no limits to your imagination, recycling is easy and fun!

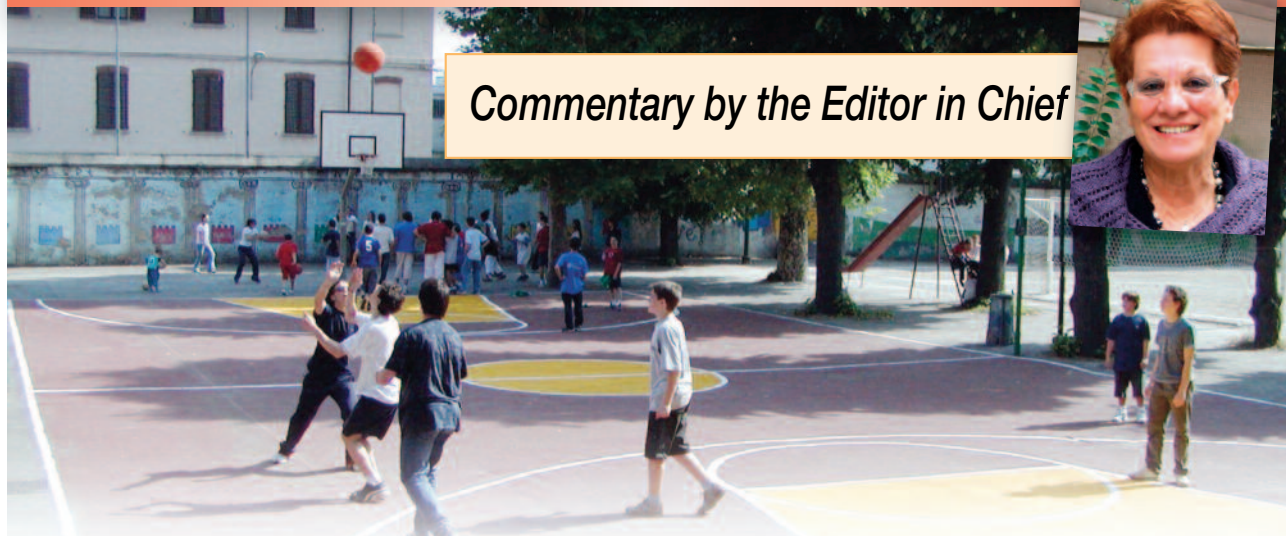
NEW LIFE FOR THE MIRROR

Giving new life to an anonymous mirror is a possible mission. It is enough to get down to work to create a very original frame from plastic spoons that will be painted later; stick them with hot glue on a sturdy cardboard base. In this way, they can renew the appearance of the bathroom or the room and have reduced the amount of plastic that ends up thrown into the sea. The same can be done with a wall clock. The frame can be made with yellow plastic spoons strung on polyethylene support for the whole size of the handle (who does not have spoons to spare after a party or a barbecue?), and this will give life to a beautiful sunflower.

Sources: www.ideegreen.it; www.designindaba.com; www.bluecedarlane.blogspot.com

A thought to live by

Commentary by the Editor in Chief



Passion, a challenge...

One day, my grandson of almost ten years old, speaking about his director of the Salesian Oratory, told his mother: “Father Federico is a person very close to God, he is always with the young people, and I would like to imitate him because he is very wise and is young”. I cannot hide that the reflection of Guillermo (the name of my grandson), not only amazed me, considering his young age but also led me to an observation.

What attitudes moved Guillermo? The “father”, in his human contact, with his educational presence, transmits a passion for what he does; it is the same “passion” that young people saw in Don Bosco, so much so that they considered themselves loved exclusively by him. “I have promised God that until my last breath I will work for my poor young people” (Don Bosco).

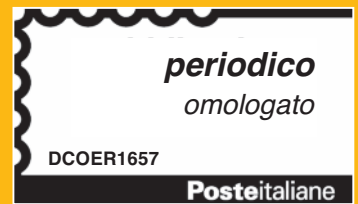
Nevertheless, proceed with the order and consider the reading key with which the word “Passion” is defined. Unfortunately, many times, it is considered that “passion” is something irrational and uncontrolled, with negative tendencies, almost as if it were the daughter of a lesser god, with respect to love.

Indeed, when we are faced with a relationship that

ends we say right away that it was “passion” and not “true love”.

However, it’s not like that! Giving only this meaning to the word passion means sacrificing the feeling of the spirit in its maximum extension. I do not intend to provide a more clarifying thought, but I would like to stimulate reflection and redeem the word passion that represents the most complete and complex feeling of the human being. True passion grants an unexpected, enormous force, which pushes us to assume all the challenges and to believe with all our soul that we can reach the goal. In this way, great projects are undertaken, part for territories marked by war to offer their skills or to put themselves at the service of those who suffer, knowing that their own lives are at risk. Is not the passion for research the engine that drives a man to achieve essential goals for the good of humanity? How many saints have not been literally “devoured” by the educational passion for the good of the young? Our Don Bosco with his “*da mihianimas*” expresses, in an excellent way, his passion for his young people. In the passion, death and resurrection of Christ, God updates his logic – paradoxical of love. In the humanity of Jesus Christ, God shapes the new man to restore the fullness of life. Love and passion, an indissoluble binomial. The great writer Oriana Fallaci expressed it this way: “to live, passion is needed”. Educating young people in passion is a challenge that we must face.

Concetta Apolito



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Beatitudes of the Salesian Family

**Blessed is the Salesian Family that finds joy in poverty.
Filled with the grace of God, it will work miracles among
the poorest and most marginalized young people ... this is holiness!**

**Blessed is the Salesian Family that, with the sweetness
and charity of the Good Shepherd, welcomes and accompanies
young people with love, educating them in dialogue
and embracing the diverse ... this is holiness!**

**Blessed is the Salesian Family, who, being close to others,
heals the wounds of those who suffer and gives back hope to those
who have lost it, bringing the joy of the Risen Christ ... this is holiness!**

**Blessed is the Salesian Family who, being hungry and thirsty for justice,
accompanies the young people to realize their project
of a full life in the family, at work,
in political and social commitment ... this is holiness!**

**Blessed is the Salesian Family, which has a living experience of mercy,
which opens its eyes and hearts to listening, to forgiveness,
becoming a welcoming home ... this is holiness!**

**Blessed is the Salesian Family that seeks to be authentic
and transparent, cultivating a vision
that goes beyond appearances
and recognizing in each person
the grace that God works in each one ... this is holiness!**

**Blessed is the Salesian Family, which, starting from the truth
of the Gospel, faithful to the charism of Don Bosco,
becomes the ferment of a new humanity,
joyfully accepting the Cross-for the Kingdom of God ... this is holiness!**